62. Communications in the Ambalapuzha taluk.

MR. K. SANKARA PANIKKAR (*Member, Ambalapuzha taluk, Group II*) urged the need for the conversion of the pathway from Mannanchery to Kalavur into a cart road. Mannanchery was a landing place and from there articles for the use of the inhabitants in the interior had to be taken by head-loads. The transport charges were so heavy as to raise the prices of the articles to twice their usual prices. Not only that, the path itself was sandy rendering even walking very difficult.

There was also no proper road from Mannanchery to Alleppey. That locality too was sandy and traffic was very difficult. A cart road connecting the two places should therefore be opened soon. The work had already been begun and it should be completed without delay.

There was a pathway from the Vada *todu* at Alleppey leading to Kottankulangara along the western side of the buildings of Messrs. Pierce Leslie and Co. But it was unfit for traffic, being too sandy. It should be metalled and rendered fit for cart traffic.

Similarly, the pathway from the District Court at Alleppey to Tattampalli backwater was also unfit for traffic. It should also be metalled and improved.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Sankara Panikkar, in regard to the first two items of your representation, that is, the road from Alleppey to Mannanchery and from Mannanchery to Kalavur, I am glad to tell you that it is possible to meet your wishes in the matter of gravelling the roads and making them fit for cart traffic.

In regard to the other two matters, I have to say that they are matters in which the Municipality is also concerned and the custom in such cases is for the Municipality to make proposals to the Government.

63. Public Offices in Kottayam.

MR. CHERIYAN K. VARGHESE (*Member, Municipal Council, Kottayam*) emphasised the need for locating the public offices, especially all the law courts, in Kottayam in one and the same place. An extent of 10 acres of land had been acquired at a cost of Rs. 52,000 during the regime of Dewan Sir P. Rajagopalachariar with the object of locating all the public offices there ; but in spite of the lapse of time, the object had not been fulfilled and consequently, the members of the local bar and bench and the litigant public were put to much inconvenience. The Accommodation Committee, appointed during the regime of Dewan, Dewan Bahadur Raghaviah recommended the location of all civil courts in one and the same place, but they ignored the criminal courts. The District Magistrate's Court and the First Class Magistrate's Court were located so dangerously near the Palace buildings that they were found to be a nuisance during the recent stay of Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent there.

The Munsiff's Court was situated nearly a mile west of the District and Sessions Court and the Taluk Cutcherry was also located in the same premises. The Second Class Magistrate's Court was a furlong south of the Munsiff's Court. The District Magistrate's and the First Class Magistrate's Courts referred to above were 1½ furlongs south of the Second Class Magistrate's Court. On account of the scattered location of the courts, the vakils and the clients were put to many difficulties and inconveniences. A vakil, who had to appear in all the courts on the same day, found it difficult to do so, with the result that cases so posted were decided *ex parte*. The presiding officers also were put to much inconvenience on account of the absence of the vakils when the cases were called. That was one of the chief reasons for the delay in the disposal of cases in the Kottayam courts. If the courts were all located in one and the same place, the difficulties pointed out would disappear. The vakils would not then have to run from one court to another far away and the presiding officers also would not be obliged to wait indefinitely or adjourn the cases on account of the absence of the vakils in time. It would also have indirectly a steadying effect on the presiding officers and staffs of the surbordinate courts as they would be compelled to attend courts punctually at office time and thus help the quicker and larger disposal of cases.

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Another advantage of the proposal was that the Government would be saving the amount that was being spent on account of rent for the buildings hired for housing the several offices. According to the member, the rent amounted to nearly Rs. 5,000 a year. That was a heavy drain on the State finances. Further, the amount already spent for the acquisition of the site referred to above was bearing no interest for a very long time without conferring any public benefit.

The existing District and Sessions Court building was very miserable and looked like a veritable stable. It was the private residence of a retired judge before it was used as a court-house and since then very few alterations had been made. When there was a third bench in the court, it was held in the kitchen room of that building. Although the site was an excellent one situated on the top of a hill, the eaves of the building were so low as to shut out light and air. The buildings should, therefore, be dismantled before fresh buildings were erected on the site.

The courts of the District, the First Class and Second Class Magistrates were all housed in miserable buildings. They were held in small rooms without proper ventilation and so the parties had to stand on the verandahs. The Second Class Magistrate's Court was the most miserably housed of all. It was frightfully hot inside and reminded one of the Black Hole of Calcutta. There was no place in which the witnesses waiting to be examined could stand and so they were making use of the cow-shed attached to the building. The distance from the shed to the witness box being less than 10 feet, the persons standing there could hear what others in the box testified.

In view of all the above difficulties, all the public offices in Kottayam should be located on the ten acre plot already acquired by the Government and suitable and up-to-date buildings should be erected for the purpose without further delay.

DEWAN: Mr. Cheriyan K. Varghese, the Government have already decided that all the public buildings and courts of Kottayam should as far as space is available—as far as ten acres will admit—be located on that one site. The Chief Engineer has been asked to commence with the Division Cutcherry and he has been instructed to draw up a working programme so as to ensure the completion of all the buildings in four years at the latest.

64. Communications in the Todupuzha taluk.

MR. TOMMAN JOSEPH (*Member, Todupuzha taluk*) said that the Government were not bestowing adequate attention on the improvement of the means of communication in the Todupuzha taluk, in spite of repeated representations on the subject made at successive sessions of the Assembly. Judged from the point of view of communications, the Todupuzha taluk deserved a differential treatment from other taluks. There were no waterways in that taluk and therefore the only available means of communication were proper roads. Thousands of acres of land had been brought under rubber, pepper and cocoanut cultivation, and for finding proper markets for the produce, adequate transport facilities were essential. In the absence of such facilities, people were put to much inconvenience and loss. Although the taluk was one of the biggest taluks in the State, there were only 59 miles of road there, of which 13 miles were roads constructed by estate owners. Even the few roads in the taluk were not properly maintained. If the Government were to spend on public works in each taluk, amounts proportionate to the income derived from it, the Todupuzha taluk would have been in a much better condition. The Government should therefore pay greater attention to the taluk which had been long neglected in the matter of communications, and provide larger amounts annually in the budget and see that the allotted amounts were spent without being allowed to lapse.

Of the several roads that were immediately necessary, the first was a road starting from the 10th mile of the Todupuzha-Muvattupuzha road and leading to and passing along the Pakuthi Cutcherry at Kumaramangalam. The total length of the proposed road was only 6½ miles, of which 3 miles had already been finished. The remaining distance should be finished soon and adequate budget provision should be made for the purpose. The road would open up one of the crowded parts of the taluk.

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